

# AGRICULTURE

## **The President's 2008 Agriculture Budget will:**

- Ensure the continuation of a strong farm economy;
- Protect the Nation's food supply;
- Develop sustainable forests;
- Promote nutrition assistance programs; and
- Encourage development in rural America.

**Ensuring the continuation of a strong farm economy:** The Administration is proposing changes to the current Farm Bill to ensure the farming economy stays strong and that our Nation's farm policy is more equitable, predictable, and protected from challenge.

## **Protecting the Nation's food supply from agriculture threats:**

- Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative: \$341 million to continue efforts to protect the Nation's food supply and agriculture from threats, whether intentional or unintentional, by enhancing the Department of Agriculture's ability to detect, respond to and recover from incidents of disease, pest or poisonous agents.
- Protecting against Avian Influenza: \$57 million for domestic surveillance and diagnostics of wild and domestic birds, emergency preparedness and response, and technical assistance to other countries.

## **Developing sustainable forests:**

- Healthy Forests Restoration Act: \$291 million to fund projects that will clear accumulated fire fuels to help prevent catastrophic wildfires.
- Northwest Forest Plan: Strengthen cooperation between the Federal government and the public to boost rural economies by harvesting 800 million board feet of timber in 2008.
- Forest Planning Rule: Employs an Environmental Management System to improve performance and accountability and which is compliant with the National Environmental Policy Act.

## **Promoting nutrition assistance programs:**

- Food Stamp Reauthorization: Excluding all retirement savings when determining eligibility for food stamps will expand the number of food stamp eligible individuals and allow recipients to save more of their earnings for retirement.
  - Protect service members and their families by ensuring that food stamps are not lost due to combat-related military pay.
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC): Provides \$5.4 billion to serve an estimated 8.3 million low-income American postpartum women and their children under five years old per month. The Department of Agriculture is issuing updated WIC food packages that reduce maximum allowances of certain foods and increase the intake of fresh fruits and vegetables.

**Encouraging development in rural America:**

- Developing Renewable Energy:
  - \$20 million in research to develop new feed stocks for energy production on a region-by-region basis.
  - \$402 million in financial assistance for rural businesses, researchers, and producers to develop and use renewable energy systems.
- Supporting Housing for Rural Residents:
  - \$4.8 billion in loan guarantees to increase single family homeownership opportunities.
  - \$28 million for a voucher program that assists tenants to pay for housing when USDA-financed properties are paid off and no longer available as subsidized housing.